

had almost nightly warned me of the proximity of a prowling panther, whose eyes were almost invariably revealed by my electric torch, but then always between me and the village about a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile beyond. The pig, however, was in a direction at right angles to the other; nevertheless, so prolonged was the scream that my apprehensions persisted for some time after, for I had fired in hasty annoyance at being disturbed.

IONA VILLA,  
KHANDALA.

5th September 1947.

K. BOSWELL,  
*Captain, I.A.M.C.*

#### 4.—PECULIAR REACTION OF A DOG TO THE HOOTING OF A SIREN

In the compound of my house on the outskirts of Benares there lives a domestic dog (a black mongrel about 12 years old). I have seen him ever since I first occupied this house in May 1942.

About a quarter of a mile from the house is situated the city's Electric Power House which sends forth every morning at 7 o'clock the loud hoot of a whistle or siren lasting for about one minute. In 1942, the morning 'whistle' was a shrill, high-pitched one, somewhat similar to those of the pre-war engines on the Indian Railways. Sometime in 1943, the Power House changed over from the shrill whistle to a comparatively low-pitched siren with a hoot very similar to that of the British-pattern air-raid sirens familiar to us during the War, and to the modern American-pattern railway engines; the pitch is higher than those of the customary steamer sirens.

Every morning, with religious regularity, the dog, as soon as he hears the siren, starts sending forth a series of loud, characteristic wails which last for the duration of the siren's hooting, i.e., about one minute. He wails in whatever position he happens to be at the moment—whether standing, sitting or lying—and with the face raised upwards. I have noticed this reaction almost every morning since 1943 to date (September 1947). To the older whistle which the Power House used to blow in 1942, the dog never reacted in this manner. As I was not on the lookout, I cannot say whether the new reaction started immediately after the change-over from the whistle to the siren, or after an interval of days or weeks, but I have a distinct re-collection that it started not very long after the change-over; it has continued ever since. The explanation of the difference in the dog's reaction to the whistle and the siren-hoot obviously lies in the difference of the pitch of the sound waves.

In addition to the morning hoot, the siren also blows at 12 noon and at 1.30 and 5.30 in the afternoon. The dog's reaction to these is similar but rather less regular. The explanation is that at these periods of the day there is a considerable amount of noise in the air, and the siren-hoots are not heard with the same clarity as in the early morning.

In the same compound there also lives an oldish black bitch and her buff-coloured son (born middle 1944) from the old black dog. In the

vicinity of the house live several other mongrels. None of them has ever exhibited the peculiar reaction to the siren-hoot mentioned above.

BENARES CANTT.  
24th September 1947.

M. L. ROONWAL, M.SC., PH.D.  
(CANTAB), F.N.I.,  
*Zoological Survey of India.*

5.—ON THE LEOPARD CAT. (*PRIONAILURUS  
BENGALENSIS*)

(*With a photo*)

A few years ago, some friends of mine went home and left a young leopard cat aged 7 months for me to look after. I was pleased



Leopard Cat

to have this opportunity of making the acquaintance of so beautiful, slender and graceful a cat, and was keen to find out for myself whether